



August 2017 newsletter

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Understand and respond to dementia-related behavior

While no two people are exactly alike, there are some similarities in behaviors when it comes to Alzheimer's disease. Those common behaviors are based on basic biology, explained Tasha Beestman, a community outreach specialist with the Alzheimer's Association Greater Wisconsin Chapter. Behaviors happen because the brain is damaged. Depending on the area of the brain affected, different behaviors may occur.

Alzheimer's starts in the hippocampus, Beestman said. She was the guest speaker at the Alzheimer's caregiver support group July meeting. The hippocampus stores short-term memories. When this area is affected, a person isn't able to create new short-term memories. He might ask the same questions over and over again.

The second area typically affected is the occipital lobe. This is the visual area of the brain. A person might miss steps, have hallucinations or misperceive things visually. Beestman shared a story about a couple. When the wife would talk on the phone, she held the black receiver to her ear. When she hung up the phone, her husband, who had Alzheimer's, would still see the phone by her ear and tell her she had dirt on her face.

Behaviors are often a form of communication, Beestman said. "It's up to us as caregivers to determine what they are trying to communicate," she said. It's important to pay attention and document when a behavior is happening and what's going on at the time. Is it a particular time of day? Is the TV news on or the radio? Are there people around?

Physical issues – including pain, hunger, needing to use the restroom and temperature – can trigger a behavior. "Pain is often a very large trigger," Beestman said.

Beestman said when she's hungry, she goes to the refrigerator and opens it. If she doesn't see anything she wants to eat, she goes to the pantry and opens it. If she still

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doesn't see something, she might go back to the refrigerator and open it again. This pattern of behavior – opening and closing doors while looking for something to eat – is muscle memory. A person with Alzheimer's might not be able to say she is hungry, but she remembers opening and closing doors, looking for something to eat.

There are also emotional causes for behaviors. People still want to feel useful. Someone who worked, cared for others or was very active still will have that need even with dementia.

If you can identify what might be causing the behavior, you can try an intervention. However, what works one day might not work the next.

Beestman shared a story about a man who cared for his wife. She believed her husband was her father, so when he wanted to take her someplace, she would say she couldn't leave because "Bob" (her husband) was coming to get her. So, he would put the telephone next to her, go outside and call her. He would say, "Hi, it's Bob. I'm waiting outside for you." She would come out and go willingly with him.

During the moment is not the time to try and figure out what's causing a behavior, Beestman said. Instead, make notes afterward and brainstorm solutions when you can think it through.

For more information, contact the Alzheimer's Association at alz.org or call the 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

How to handle chronic pain

Pain seems to go hand in hand with aging. Joints wear out. Arthritis sets in. Injuries or illness can cause ongoing, chronic pain.

Pain doesn't have to keep you down or away from the activities that you love. There are treatment options, and physical therapy might be a good place to start.

**Let's
Learn
Together!**



- Guest speaker
- Refreshments
- Q&A
- Free to public

Carl de Luca of Roberts & Associates will be the guest speaker at the next Let's Learn Together free public speaker series. Join us at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 17 at Hilltop Grand Village.

We record most Let's Learn Together segments for Wisconsin Rapids Community Media. You can see them at 9 a.m. Mondays and 11 a.m. Wednesdays on Solarus Channel 3 or Charter Channel 985. If you want to see previous programs, log on to YouTube and search "Hilltop Grand Village" to find our play list, which includes all of the Let's Learn Together segments.

All of the presentations are free and open to the public. They are designed to help everyone learn more about a variety of topics.

Upcoming sessions include:

- **Sept. 7, 7 p.m.** Matt Casper of Thrivent: Preparing for Long Term Care. Have you prepared for Long Term Care? How do I avoid the pitfalls in planning? And what questions do I need to be asking?
- **Oct. 19, 1 p.m.** Rhonda Whetstone: Family History: How to get started learning about your family history and what to save for your children.



We had a full house at attorney Alan Panek's elder law session.

All programs will be held at Hilltop Grand Village, 1400 24th St. S. Enter by Home Depot. With questions, call Mystique at 715-423-7400 or email mystique@hilltopgrandvillage.com.



Happy Birthday!

The following Hilltop residents celebrate birthdays in August:

- Jerome, Aug. 4
- David, Aug. 14
- Jan, Aug. 22
- Bart, Aug. 25
- Betty, Aug. 27

Hilltop music and outings

Join us for these upcoming musical performances and outings. The public is welcome.

- Aug. 2: Community picnic, 4:30-8 p.m., downtown Wisconsin Rapids
- Aug. 9: Hilltop's Piano Man Chuck Huhnke, 12:30 p.m., Hilltop Grand Village
- Aug. 10: Lunch by the River, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Veterans Memorial Park
- Aug. 23: Hilltop's Piano Man Chuck Huhnke, 12:30 p.m., Hilltop Grand Village

Chef Rick brought his bicycle built for two to Hilltop Grand Village and took Jean for a spin! You'll have to ask them what was so funny! Tea time with vintage hats and decos remains popular among the ladies at Hilltop Grand Village.



Hilltop hosted the city band concert in July. It was a beautiful night for music in the park!



Reflexology can help reduce caregiver stress

Caregivers are under a lot of stress. Those who care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or other dementia go through an even greater emotional upheaval during the course of the illness. Learn to let go of some of that stress as Joe Leazott of Radiant Life shares reflexology techniques. You'll leave feeling rejuvenated and uplifted!

Join us at the next meeting of the Alzheimer's caregiver support group at 9:30 a.m. Aug. 10 at the Brehm Conference Room in the Centralia Center.

We offer refreshments and a time for sharing among the caregivers who attend. Anyone who cares for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia or anyone wishing to learn more is welcome to attend. There is no cost and no obligation.

If you need respite care for your loved one so you can attend, call Hilltop at 715-423-7400 to arrange free care during the meeting.

Memory cafe

The Wisconsin Rapids memory café is held from 10:30 a.m. to noon the second Tuesday of every month at Centralia Center. The next one will be Aug. 8. It's an opportunity for people with mild to moderate cognitive impairment and their caregivers to get together socially.

For more information, call Karen at Park Place Adult Day Services at 715-422-2795.



Mackenzie and her beagle Mabel have become favorite visitors to Hilltop of Pepper. Mabel is in training to become a therapy dog and must complete 10 hour-long visits to one facility. We are thrilled they chose Hilltop. Mabel is a rescue dog. She's 6 years old and very easy-going. She loves scratches and attention.

Administrative assistant Chris invited her grandchildren to bring their pets to visit residents at Hilltop Alpine Terrace. They loved holding and petting the two kittens and a bunny. They didn't want to let them leave!

